The background features a series of concentric squares in shades of green and yellow. Two large, light-colored arrows are positioned diagonally, one pointing from the top-left towards the bottom-right and the other from the top-right towards the bottom-left, creating a circular flow effect around the central text.

# ***Preparing All Students for College, Career, Life, and Leadership in The 21st Century***

**Superintendent's Advisory Task Force on  
Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

**May 2016**

***Performance. Equity. Improvement.***

**Presented to:**

**Tom Torlakson**

**State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**California Department of Education**

**May 2016**



## PUBLISHING INFORMATION

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SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

## MESSAGE FROM TASK FORCE CO-CHAIRS

Dear Superintendent Torlakson:

With great pleasure and satisfaction, we submit to you the attached report from your advisory Accountability and Continuous Improvement Task Force.

This document represents the consensus thinking of the 30 exceptional men and women who participated in this effort. Their work included five in-person meetings as well as numerous webinars, conference calls, and document reviews.

While no small task, the Task Force's hard work has resulted in a strong set of recommendations toward an Accountability and Continuous Improvement System that better serves our students and our state.

As you read these recommendations, we hope that you will see a reconfirmation of the "California Way" that you, the Governor, and the State Board of Education, as well as stakeholders throughout the state, have been so successfully implementing in recent years. We also think you will see new breakthrough thinking in relation to accountability, continuous improvement, and the support systems that will be necessary for Californians to make progress together in these areas.

The great diversity of the task force was its strength – its members represented the full spectrum of our state, including businesses, administrators, teachers, parents, school board members, students, researchers, philanthropy, institutions of higher education, and others.

This is a consensus document, and we know that each member of the task force would have written at least some part of this differently had they done it on their own. Nevertheless, through much discussion and debate, we submit to you a report that is not watered down and reflects the critical and creative thinking of the Task Force. Thank you for bringing together this outstanding team and for providing the great support systems that made this work possible.

We know that the submission of this report is not an end point, but a new beginning. We are keenly aware of the difficult work ahead to put together and implement a system of accountability and continuous improvement that truly supports our students and those who serve them. The fact, however, that as a Task Force we were ready, willing, and able to roll up our sleeves and confront difficult questions together gives us great confidence for the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to co-chair this outstanding effort. We stand ready to help as you work together with the Governor, the State Board of Education, the Legislature, and, most importantly, California's students and families, to realize the promise of an accountability and continuous improvement system that is rooted in **performance, equity, and improvement**.

We know that we speak for the entire Task Force in expressing our thanks for the opportunity to be involved in this work at this historic moment. Please let us know how we can continue to be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Eric Heins  
President  
California Teachers Association



Wes Smith  
Executive Director  
Association of California School Administrators

SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the work and recommendations of California Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson's Advisory Task Force on Accountability and Continuous Improvement.<sup>1</sup>

The Task Force was convened at a critical moment for public education in our state. California has started on a pathway towards the creation of a better system for our students, one that rests on a foundation of student success, relies on high standards, more equitably distributes resources (through the Local Control Funding Formula), and trusts local educators and communities to design the educational structures and supports that our students need to reach their full potential (through the Local Control and Accountability Plans). This emerging "California Way" builds on a collaborative approach to positive education change.

The Task Force's work was guided by the California Department of Education's strategic plan, *A Blueprint for Great Schools Version 2.0*, which lays out the mission, guiding principles, and right drivers that shaped the direction of the accountability and continuous improvement system proposed here.<sup>2 3</sup> Simultaneous to the work of the Task Force, California's State Board of Education has been engaged in development of Local Control Funding Formula evaluation rubrics.<sup>4</sup> California now has the opportunity to develop a system of accountability and continuous improvement that aligns with and extends the provisions outlined in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to support a world-class education for every student in the Golden State.

Building on this great potential for alignment and positive change, the task force's recommendations can be summarized in three words: **performance, equity, and improvement.**

Our new system should build upon students' and educators' own intrinsic motivation and proven techniques of management and organizational development that clearly define success, support its realization, and provide high-profile recognition when success occurs. California is committed to utilizing multiple measures to highlight our **performance** in relation to the full spectrum of outcomes we care about for our students and schools. The Task Force strongly recommends that these be presented in an easy-to-use dashboard format. They should range from a positive school climate in which students report feeling engaged and respected to mastery of the state's robust academic content standards.

We are equally committed to supporting and cultivating a system-wide culture of continuous **improvement** in order to advance and achieve these outcomes that relies on multiple measures to provide the information necessary to engage in improvement efforts. This culture of continuous improvement must infuse all parts of the system, **including continuous improvement for the system itself**, through evaluative mechanisms that allow us to learn from local experience and revisit the indicators, tools, and systems of support we use to ensure they are working as intended. To this point, the Task Force proposes ongoing evaluation of the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System and making course corrections and updates as needed to better serve California's students and stakeholders. The recommendations presented in this report should not be considered an end point but rather a beginning point for continuous improvement.

Finally, both improvement and performance must have a deliberate focus on supporting **equity** of access, opportunity, and outcomes for all of California's diverse students. Historically, in California and the nation,

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<sup>1</sup> The Accountability and Continuous Improvement Task Force was co-chaired by Eric Heins, California Teachers Association, and Wes Smith, Association of California School Administrators. See Appendix C for a full membership roster.

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Education, Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team (2015). *A Blueprint for Great Schools, Version 2.0*. Retrieved on December 20, 2015, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/bp/documents/yr15bp0720.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Fullan, M. (2011). *Choosing the Wrong Drivers for Whole System Reform*. Centre for Strategic Education. Retrieved on December 18, 2015, from <http://www.michaelfullan.ca/media/13501655630.pdf>.

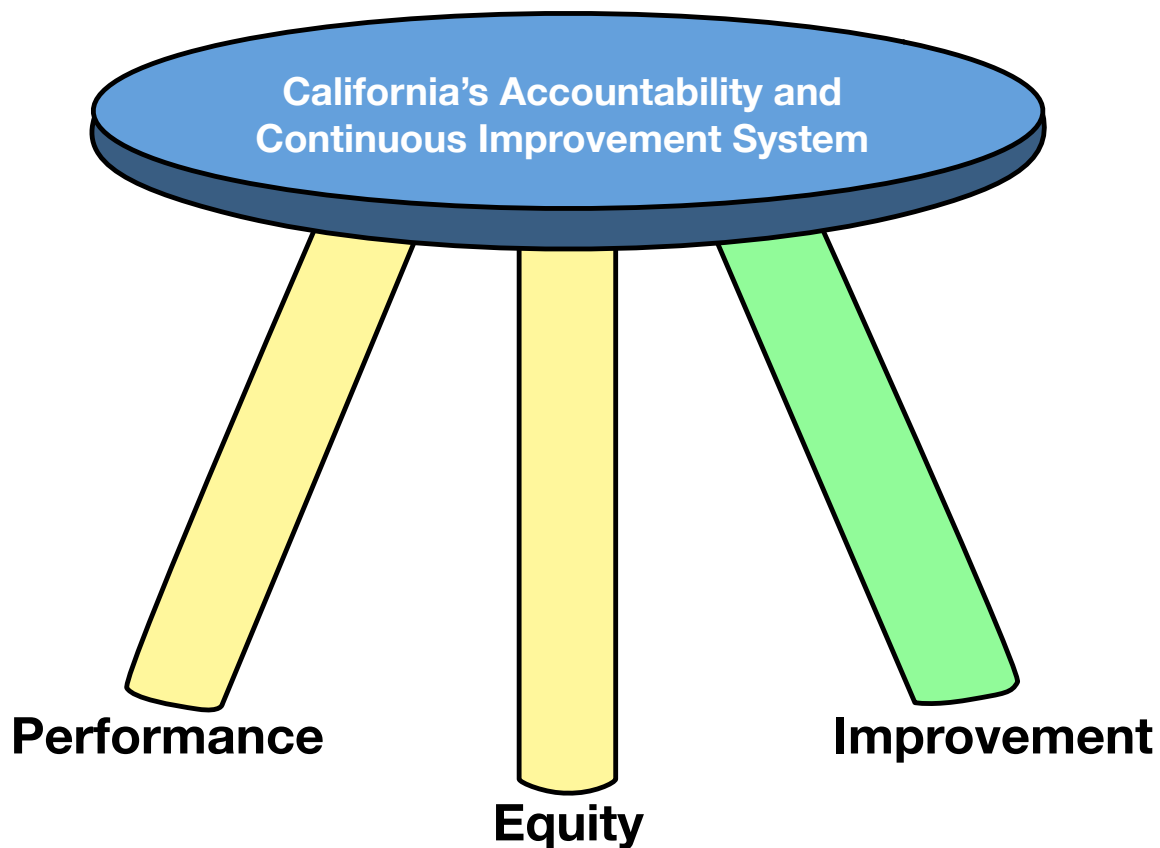
<sup>4</sup> See the State Board of Education website for extensive documentation on this process: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/index.asp>. See also page 24 of this report.

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the public education system has not equitably supported all student groups; it is our duty to make the historic shifts to build a system that recognizes our past shortcomings, shines light on areas where more work is needed to rectify the achievement/equity gap, and provides support and recognition for improvement.

The Task Force's proposed Accountability and Continuous Improvement System should rely on a holistic picture of how schools and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) are doing in regard to both performance and equity. The state's system should simultaneously look at the ways in which performance and equity are improving in order to fully realize the outcomes that we seek.

**Performance. Equity. Improvement.**

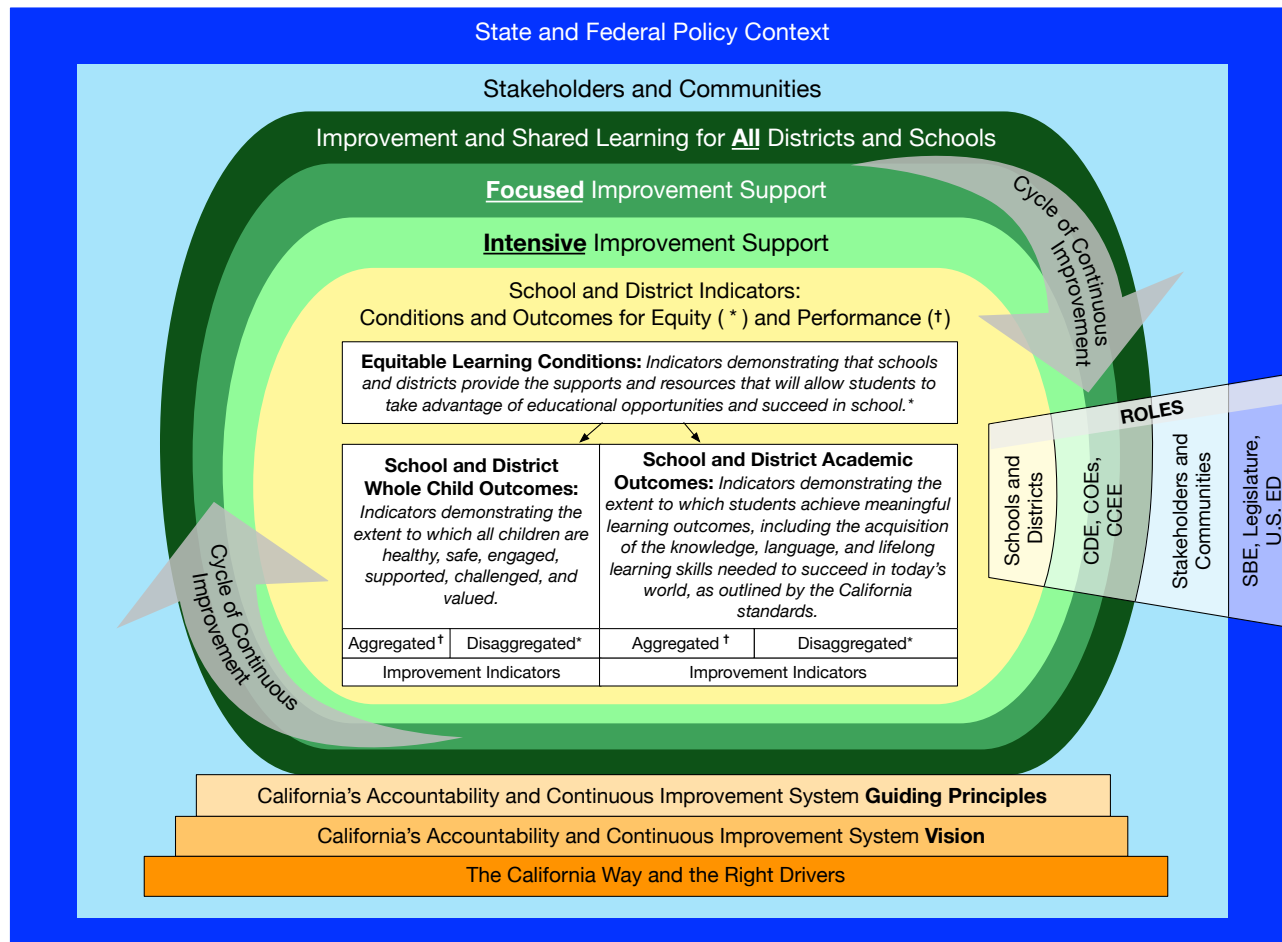


The following pages of the Executive Summary provide a graphic overview of the key features of the proposed system's implementation and integration of the performance, equity, and improvement themes.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

THE PROPOSED NEW ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM: A GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION

This graphic presents the core features of the proposed new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System. The full report uses this as a roadmap, with each component highlighted separately to explain each feature of the system - the following page provides a summary description of each feature.





## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

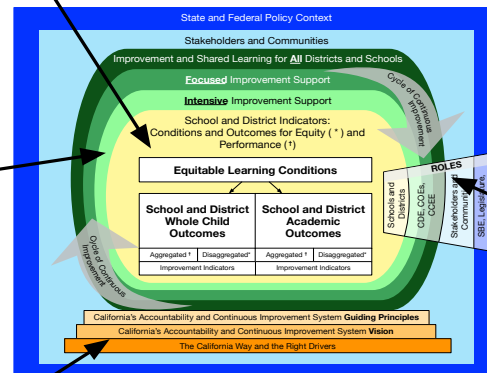
## SUMMARY DESCRIPTIONS: COMPONENTS OF THE NEW ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

**School and District Indicators**

California seeks to develop a system that incorporates multiple measures to present a holistic picture of **performance, equity, and improvement** for schools, LEAs, and the state. The new system, rooted in and part of LCFF and LCAP, will examine school/district learning conditions to understand if the system is providing equitable resources and opportunities for all students. It will also examine academic and non-academic outcome indicators to understand student performance; and it will disaggregate these indicators by student groups as a measure of equity. The new system will examine the rate of improvement across these indicators as a means of highlighting and building on successful practices, and identifying where additional improvement support is needed.

**Cycle of Continuous Improvement**

California recognizes that its accountability framework is only helpful to the extent that it is integrally tied to a system of continuous improvement and support. By looking at measures of performance, equity, and improvement, with regard to both whole child and academic indicators, schools and districts will be able to self-identify their strengths, areas where support is needed, and where support is available within the greater ecosystem of peer learning. This will allow for a system of differentiated improvement supports at three levels that recognizes success and shares promising and successful practices between LEAs throughout the state.

**Roles**

California's Accountability and Continuous Improvement System must include clearly defined roles for federal, state, and local stakeholders. Each level of the system should be held responsible for the contributions it must make to support learning and development for every child.

**Policy Makers:** Policy makers at the state and federal level should establish policies and standards that support continuous improvement, set clear expectations for outcomes and improvement, provide adequate resources, support the elimination of opportunity and achievement gaps, and foster innovation.

**Stakeholders and Communities:** One of California's greatest assets is its large base of supportive and committed stakeholders. From advocates, professional organizations, unions, institutions of higher education, philanthropy, parent groups, community voices, business organizations, early learning and care, and beyond, this coalition of supportive stakeholders will be instrumental in the successful communication about, transition to, and implementation of this new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System.

**The CDE, CCEE, and COEs:** The State Superintendent of Public Instruction/CDE, the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), and county superintendents/offices of education (COEs)—must work collaboratively to provide coordinated support for school accountability and continuous improvement. Additionally, the State Superintendent must take action if a school or district is unable to improve over time.

**Schools and Districts:** Schools and districts are at the center of California's system. They must engage students, parents and caregivers, educators, and other stakeholders in school and district-level planning and support to ensure that all students are provided with meaningful opportunities to learn and contribute. They must implement instructional improvement strategies and marshal the financial and professional capital required to implement these strategies and improve student outcomes.

**Foundation**

As a state, we seek to realize our vision to provide a world-class education for all students, from early childhood to adulthood, and prepare students to live, work, and thrive in a multicultural, multilingual, and highly connected world. We pursue rigorous learning and achievement in every classroom and every school.

We will embrace the California Way, which rests on the belief that educators want to excel, trusts them to improve when given the proper supports, and provides local schools and districts with the leeway and flexibility to deploy resources so they can improve.

To do this, California's Accountability and Continuous Improvement System will:

- Demonstrate a commitment to equity
  - Emphasize the importance of educating the whole child
  - Focus on building collaboration, engagement, and professional capital
  - Recognize that improvement and learning are continuous
  - Value the knowledge and expertise of educators and communities
  - Rely on reciprocity and subsidiarity
  - Embrace students, parents, and families as critical stakeholders
  - Identify and recognize districts, schools, and classrooms that can serve as models and those that need support
- The proposed system builds on State Board of Education guiding principles.



## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

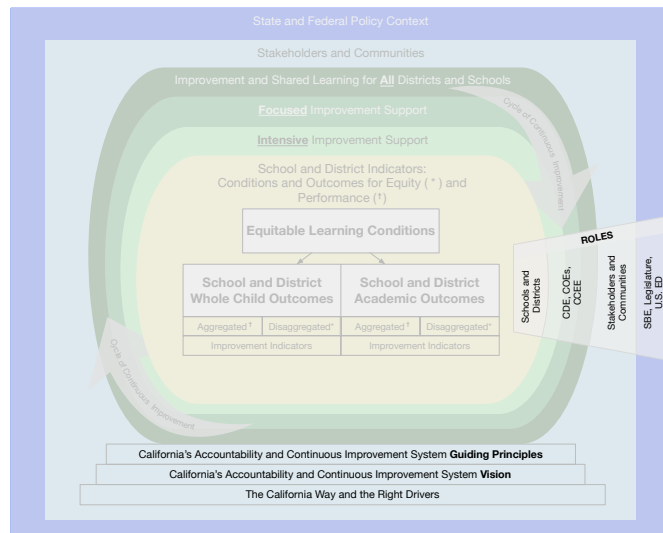
### 2. FOUNDATION

The proposed Accountability and Continuous Improvement System rests on a foundation of a common vision, guiding principles, and a shared commitment to the “California Way.” The Task Force believes this foundation and the more detailed recommendations that follow, are aligned with and, in some cases, an extension of, the work being undertaken by the California State Board of Education (SBE) involving the development of LCFF Evaluation Rubrics. This foundation will also support planning work to be undertaken for the ESSA state plan.

#### VISION

In the same way that a classroom teacher starts each school year with a vision of what success will look like for his/her students, we began our design process by working on a shared vision. As a state, *we seek to provide a world-class education for all students, from early childhood to adulthood, and prepare students to live, work, and thrive in a multicultural, multilingual, and highly connected world.*<sup>5</sup> The state’s Accountability and Continuous Improvement System should help provide local educators and communities with the information and tools they need to engage in a process of continuous improvement, where collaborative planning, implementation, and analysis leads to ongoing adjustments to successfully address the diverse needs of all students. California’s Accountability and Continuous Improvement System should:

- **Demonstrate a commitment to equity** by ensuring that all student groups are visible in accountability and improvement efforts and setting goals for closing gaps. The system should provide clarity on gaps in achievement, opportunity, and access between student groups and provide tools to eliminate these gaps.<sup>6</sup>
- **Emphasize the importance of educating the whole child** by using indicators from multiple domains. The system should include holistic and developmentally appropriate metrics to monitor progress towards preparing all students for college, career, life, and leadership in the 21st century.
- **Focus on building collaboration, engagement, and professional capital** to ensure that educators have supports they need to improve student learning.
- **Recognize that improvement and learning are continuous** and emphasize feedback loops with a focus on continuous improvement and quality throughout every level of the system.
- **Value the knowledge and expertise of educators and communities** by relying on accountability and improvement plans that are locally driven and state supported.
- **Rely on subsidiarity and reciprocal accountability**, holding every level of the system responsible for the contributions it must make to support learning for every child.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team (2015).

<sup>6</sup> The term “student group” refers to the student subgroups that are included in Local Control and Accountability Plans including socioeconomically disadvantaged students, English learners, students with disabilities, and foster youth, disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

<sup>7</sup> According to the Oxford English Dictionary, “subsidiarity” represents the idea that a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks that cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- **Embrace students, parents, and families as critical stakeholders** in the accountability system.
- **Identify and recognize districts, schools, and classrooms that can serve as models for those that need support**, to create an environment where we can learn from each other, collaborate, and improve together.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The shared vision outlined above provides a foundation for developing the proposed Accountability and Continuous Improvement System while the following guiding principles from the SBE offer a framework for making decisions about the system:<sup>8</sup>

1. Articulate the state's expectations for districts, schools, and county offices of education. Promote a broad understanding of the specific goals that need to be met at each level of the educational system.<sup>9</sup>
2. Foster equity. Create support structures, including technical assistance for districts and schools, to promote success for all students regardless of background, primary language, or socioeconomic status.
3. Provide useful information that helps parents and caregivers, districts, schools, county offices of education, and policymakers make important decisions. Assist and engage parents, educators and policymakers through regular communication and transparent, timely reporting of data so they can take action appropriate to their roles.
4. Build capacity and increase support for districts, schools, and county offices. Seek to build capacity at all levels by reinforcing the importance of sound teaching and learning practices and providing necessary support to help schools reach their goals.
5. Encourage continuous improvement focused on student-level outcomes, using multiple measures for state and local priorities. Focus on ongoing improvement of student outcomes, including college- and career-readiness, using multiple measures that reflect both status and growth.
6. Promote system-wide integration and innovation. Purposely and effectively integrate each accountability system component, including groups and technologies, creating a coherent, effective and efficient support structure for districts, charter schools, and county offices of education.<sup>10</sup>

The Task Force developed the following additional guiding principles:

7. Align to the extent possible local, state, and federal accountability and continuous improvement systems to create **one single integrated system** for use by schools, districts, county offices of education, and the State of California. Lead with California's commitment to subsidiarity and the strengthening of local assets and capacities;<sup>11</sup> and
8. Encourage labor-management collaboration in districts, schools, and county offices of education as an underlying foundation for effective implementation of the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System.<sup>12</sup>

### THE CALIFORNIA WAY: USING THE RIGHT DRIVERS TO GUIDE IMPROVEMENT

*"The California Way rests on the belief that educators want to excel, trusts them to improve when given the proper supports, and provides local schools and districts with the leeway and flexibility to deploy resources so they can improve. The California Way engages students, parents, and communities as part of a collaborative decision-making process about how to fund and implement these*

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix B for the complete State Board of Education's Guiding Principles for Accountability System Planning.

<sup>9</sup> Throughout this document the term "schools" is used to refer to all public schools in California, including charter schools.

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/nr/yr15sberel01.asp>.

<sup>11</sup> See Section 5 for recommendations for alignment of accountability and continuous improvement plans.

<sup>12</sup> Information on the California Labor-Management Initiative can be found at [www.cdefoundation.org/lmi](http://www.cdefoundation.org/lmi).

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*improvement efforts, and provides supplemental resources to ensure that California's English learners, foster youth, and students in poverty have the learning supports they need.”<sup>13</sup>*

As noted education researcher and advisor Michael Fullan explains, “The key to system-wide success is to situate the energy of educators and students as the central driving force. This means aligning the goals of reform and the intrinsic motivation of participants.”<sup>14</sup> In order to create an effective and sustainable system of accountability and continuous improvement that builds on the collaborative approach described by both Fullan and the California Way, actors at all levels of the proposed system must focus on the “right drivers,” which “foster motivation of teachers and students; engage educators and students in continuous improvement; improve team work; and affect all teachers and students.”<sup>15</sup> The right drivers identified in *A Blueprint for Great Schools Version 2.0* include:

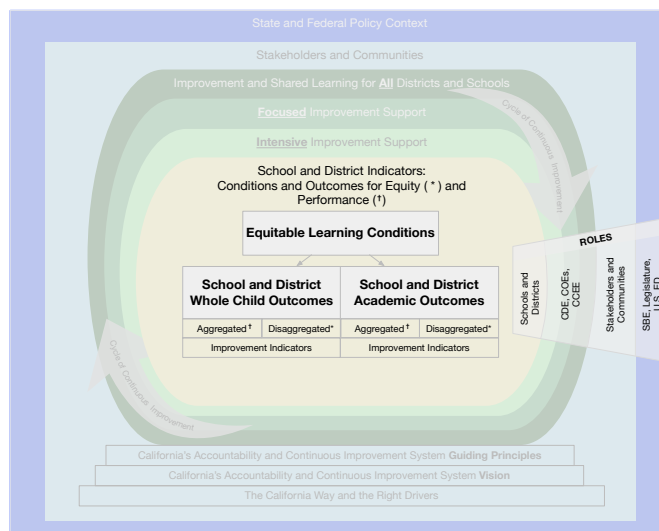
- Investing in and building educator **professional capital**;
- Emphasizing **collaborative efforts** based on shared aspirations and expectations;
- Supporting effective pedagogy;
- Developing **systemic solutions** to create a coherent and positive education system.<sup>16</sup>

Moving away from a compliance-driven system towards a system that emphasizes the right drivers will require a significant cultural shift in how many education stakeholders define accountability.<sup>17</sup> Together with the guiding principles, these right drivers serve as a litmus test for future accountability and continuous improvement policies and practices.

### 3. ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

Building upon the foundation described above, the proposed Accountability and Continuous Improvement System relies on a set of multiple measures to examine **performance, equity, and improvement**. These should be presented through user-friendly dashboards.<sup>18</sup> Examining these multiple measures will:

- Demonstrate the extent to which schools and districts provide the supports and resources that will allow students to take advantage of educational opportunities and succeed in school (Equitable Learning Conditions).
- Highlight whole child development by examining indicators that show the extent to which all children are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, challenged, and valued (School and District Whole Child Outcomes).



<sup>13</sup> Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team (2015).

<sup>14</sup> Fullan, M. (2011).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team (2015).

<sup>17</sup> Appendix A highlights the ways in which these drivers could be applied across the K-12 and Early Learning System to support articulation and alignment.

<sup>18</sup> The dashboard approach will allow the presentation of multiple kinds of data and assessments to support multiple ways of monitoring and improving, just as a driver uses many different gauges, windows, and mirrors.

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- Illustrate the extent to which students achieve meaningful learning outcomes, including the acquisition of the knowledge, language, and lifelong learning skills needed to succeed (School and District Academic Outcomes).
- Reveal disparities by disaggregating student outcomes by student groups and examining learning conditions through the lens of equity.

### DEFINITION OF ACCOUNTABILITY

The Superintendent's Advisory Task Force on Accountability and Continuous Improvement offers the definition of accountability below. This shared definition allowed the Task Force to identify the primary purposes of an accountability system and consider how these purposes could be achieved through a system that emphasizes both performance, equity, and improvement. This definition focuses on intrinsic motivation, the right drivers, and reciprocal accountability across all levels of the system.

**Accountability** is a shared responsibility to: 1) Provide students with the learning experiences and supports they need to achieve meaningful outcomes, and 2) Effectively collaborate and share information among teachers and classified staff, schools, students, parents and caregivers, administrators, districts, communities, county offices of education, and the state to ensure that every part of the system has the capacity, tools, and resources necessary to provide these learning experiences and support. Implementing this two-pronged definition of accountability leads to increasing levels of support for improvements at all levels of the system. Our California Accountability and Continuous Improvement System is based on:

- Shared responsibility to support learning for every child;
- Comprehensively measuring performance, equity, improvement, and how well the system is meeting its goals, including linking results to the tiered system of support and intervention;<sup>19</sup>
- Considering all the factors that affect performance and outcomes in order to identify, share, and promote best and promising practices, and change courses of action that are not achieving our desired outcomes;
- Clearly communicating expectations and processes at all levels;
- Reporting the results of selected measures to all partners in education and in the community; and
- Taking what we know and have learned from careful assessments and using that information by working together to channel support and resources to make improvements where they are needed.

### DEFINITIONS: PERFORMANCE, EQUITY, WHOLE CHILD

Similarly, to build common understanding and support for the Task Force's proposed Accountability and Continuous Improvement System, the task force recommends the following definitions:

**Performance:** the extent to which schools, districts, and the state support students to achieve meaningful outcomes. *A Blueprint for Great Schools Version 2.0* recommends that meaningful learning should support the acquisition of the knowledge, language, lifelong learning skills, and dispositions that students need to succeed: the ability to apply complex knowledge to solve problems, collaborate, communicate, inquire, learn independently, and build relationships, and the capacity to be resilient and resourceful.<sup>20</sup>

**Equity:** Educational equity exists where students, particularly from vulnerable student groups, are guaranteed the culturally appropriate and linguistically accessible supports and resources needed to take advantage of educational opportunities and succeed in school at the same level as other students.

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<sup>19</sup> For more information see pages 15-19 for proposed indicators and pages 22-23 for the tiered system of support and intervention.

<sup>20</sup> Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team (2015).

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

**Whole Child:** An approach to learning that ensures that every child is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, challenged, and valued.<sup>21</sup>

### EQUITY, PERFORMANCE, IMPROVEMENT

California's new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System should create a holistic picture of how well the schools, LEAs, and the state are realizing California's vision of success for all students. To do this, the Task Force recommends a balanced set of academic and non-academic indicators that illustrate student performance and equitable learning conditions, and improvement in both (see Figure 1). The Task Force recognizes that it is important to utilize a whole child approach and not incentivize the wrong drivers. In considering rates and targets, the Task Force advises an emphasis on continuous, sustainable improvements rooted in the ongoing development of professional capital. This balanced set of academic and non-academic indicators should be depicted in easy-to-read dashboard formats (see p. 30).

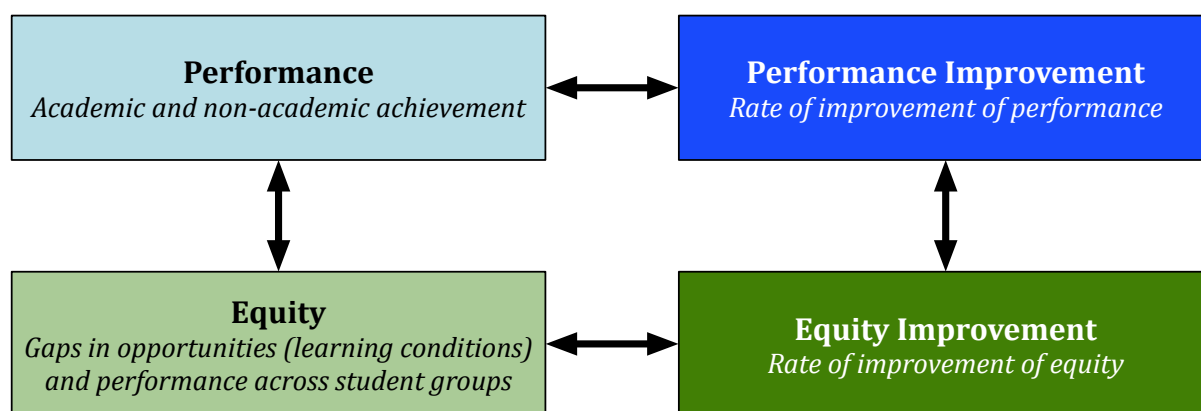


Figure 1

#### PERFORMANCE:

The performance measure illustrates the state of student outcomes at a point in time across a range of academic and non-academic areas.<sup>22</sup> It uses multiple indicators to depict the current level of performance. The performance measure shows the extent to which a district or school is meeting outcomes for students at both an aggregated and disaggregated (by student group) level.<sup>23</sup>

#### PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT:

The performance improvement or change measure denotes the level of improvement based on changes over time to the indicators included in the performance measure. It should be provided in aggregated and disaggregated (by student group) forms. The Task Force's proposed new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System **places significant value on improvement**. The value of improvement lies in both the importance of striving to increase student and system outcomes, and the opportunity that improvement provides for shared learning across the system. The performance improvement measure serves multiple purposes, providing opportunities to:

<sup>21</sup> Adapted from ASCD. See <http://www.ascd.org/whole-child.aspx>.

<sup>22</sup> There are a number of possible approaches to achieve this. Some possible examples include a model used in Alberta Canada, while another might be a quadrant-based scatter plot, such as the model developed by Children Now.

<sup>23</sup> It is critical to consider indicators that reliably predict the longer-term student outcomes we seek; for example, indicators in the early grades should predict graduation rates, while indicators in the secondary grades should predict college and career preparedness, etc.

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1. Highlight and recognize those districts and schools making concerted and successful efforts to improve;
2. Identify districts and schools that need support to address challenges and needs; and
3. Identify promising practices, in aggregate or by student group, that could be applied by other LEAs and schools across the system.

### EQUITY:

The equity measure sheds light on disparities in opportunities and outcomes across student groups. Equity should be examined through indicators of equitable learning conditions and by disaggregating performance measures by student groups. California's public education system is entrusted to provide high-quality educational opportunities for all of its students. A robust accountability system identifies barriers that limit access to a rigorous and nurturing educational experience for all students, especially those requiring special education, foster youth, homeless youth, those from low-income families, English learners, and vulnerable racial and ethnic groups. The Accountability and Continuous Improvement System should help identify supports needed to eradicate those barriers, maintain and measure progress towards clear goals, and hold schools, districts, and educators accountable for closing achievement gaps and advancing a range of culturally responsive and linguistically supportive opportunities to ensure success in school and acquisition of the skills necessary to be college, career, and life ready.

### EQUITY IMPROVEMENT:

Similar to the performance improvement or change measure, equity improvement illustrates the level of improvement on equity indicators. This measure looks at the rate of improvement of equitable learning conditions that capture the level of equity in a school or district and the rate at which performance gaps across student groups are closing, staying the same, or growing. Improving equity of access and opportunity and closing achievement gaps are critical to improving outcomes for all students. Additionally, looking at the rate of improvement on equity indicators provides a way to identify and act on promising practices for improving student equity.

## INDICATORS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Task Force recommends a series of indicator sets for different uses and at different levels of the system. These various sets of indicators should be depicted in visually attractive and easy-to-use dashboards that will allow the system to:

- Ensure that the state and system as a whole are continuously improving;
- Set clear expectations for performance, equity, and improvement across the state with regard to student learning and achievement;
- Collect additional diagnostic information to support continuous improvement efforts; and
- Provide LEAs with the flexibility to identify indicators of interest.

### LEVELS OF INDICATORS

To build a system that fully supports and values **performance, equity, and improvement**, California should utilize appropriate indicator sets for each level of accountability and continuous improvement.<sup>24</sup> This work should build upon the state priorities articulated by the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF)

<sup>24</sup> "An indicator provides evidence that certain conditions exist or certain results have or have not been achieved. Indicators enable decision-makers to assess progress towards the achievement of intended outputs, outcomes, goals, and objectives." (Harvard Family Research Project) Horsch, K. (1997). Indicators: definition and use in a results-based accountability system. Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from: <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/indicators-definition-and-use-in-a-results-based-accountability-system>.

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and ongoing work to develop the LCFF evaluation rubrics. The proposed indicators include locally determined indicators included in Local Control and Accountability Plans and also include state-determined indicators that align with ESSA requirements. As summarized by Table 1 and Figure 2 below, targeted indicator sets should be developed and provided for specific system levels and accountability and continuous improvement purposes.

Table 1: Levels of Indicators	
Indicator Set	Definition and Use
State-Required	These indicators should be used for both state and federal (ESSA) purposes, should be applicable and relevant statewide, and should be utilized by California to gauge the success of federal and state-level accountability and continuous improvement supports for LEAs and schools.
State-Reported	These indicators should be vetted and reported by the state and available for use in the state’s Accountability and Continuous Improvement System for LEAs and schools. These indicators should complement the state-required indicator set by providing a more holistic picture of performance, equity, and improvement.
State-Supported, Locally-Reported	These indicators should provide additional diagnostic and evaluation information and should be available for <b>voluntary</b> local use that is supported with tools provided by the state, allowing schools and LEAs to evaluate learning opportunities more deeply. They should be locally-reported and used for diagnostic and improvement purposes in the context of state and local accountability and continuous improvement systems.
Locally Generated and Reported	These indicators should be identified and vetted locally and used for additional information for LCAP design, implementation, and evaluation.
State System	These indicators should be identified by the state to use in evaluating its work supporting the statewide system; these indicators should be used to drive the continuous improvement of the state’s systems of support.

As illustrated by Figure 2, these indicator sets form a comprehensive package that focuses on supporting and driving local accountability and continuous improvement. They should be depicted and reported in easy-to-use dashboard formats.



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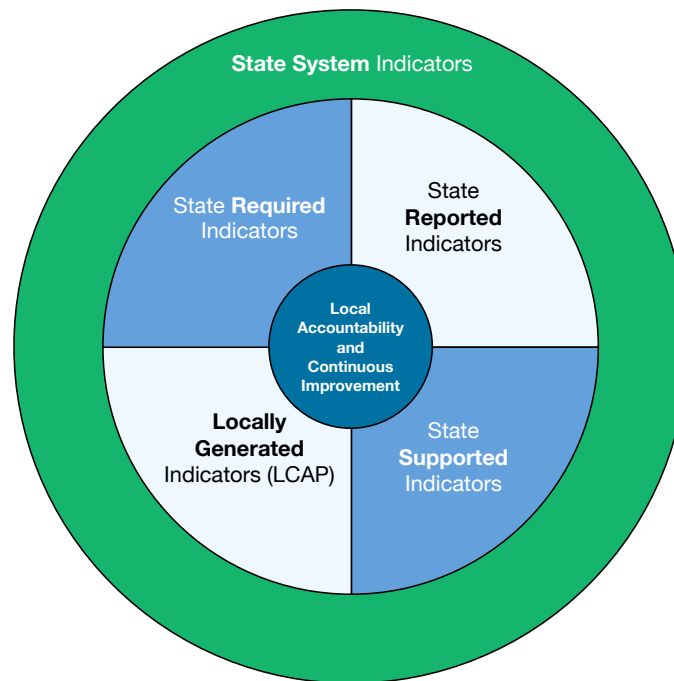


Figure 2: Integrated Indicator Sets

Tables 2-6 provide possible specific indicators, with associated comments, for each indicator set described above. Taken together, these tables illustrate an integration path utilizing Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) evaluation rubrics as central drivers of one coherent and comprehensive system that incorporates the federal accountability requirements.

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#### STATE AND LOCAL INDICATORS FOR LEAS AND SCHOOLS

The tables below contain the proposed indicators for each level of the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System. Each set of indicators, including those that are state-required and state-reported, **includes both academic and whole child indicators** that should be used to measure performance, equity, and improvement. This balance of academic and non-academic indicators will provide a more holistic depiction of the extent to which all students are prepared for college, career, life, and leadership in the 21st century. Indicators in Table 2 are explicitly linked to ESSA Requirements while the indicators in Tables 3-5 are linked to desired outcomes.

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Table 2: State-Required Indicators		
ESSA Requirement <sup>25</sup>	Recommended California Indicators <sup>26</sup>	Explanatory Notes
Academic Outcomes		
Academic achievement, as measured by proficiency on annual assessments	CASSP English language arts and mathematics scores in grades 3-8, inclusive, plus grade 11	To be measured by scale scores reflecting both status and student growth over time. Scale SBAC scores would be broken down into different subjects (i.e. math and English) and reported by grade span (i.e. grades 3-5, 6-8, 11)
High school graduation rates	4-year Graduation rates plus an extended rate (5- and/or 6-year rate)	At high school, including a 5- or 6-year graduation rate as well as 4-year rates (with at least equal weight) creates incentives for schools to keep / work with students with challenges.
Progress in achieving English language proficiency as defined by the State, within a State-determined timeline for all English Learners	English Learner (EL) progress on state English Proficiency Assessment	The State LCFF identifies progress toward English proficiency and reclassification rates. EL progress using scale scores on an EL proficiency measure is better for tracking the progress of all students, ensuring attention to the full range of EL students and their needs – from those who are newcomers to those who are becoming and have become ‘proficient.’ Progress of ELs could be measured by a composite or by multiple indicators for English Learner progress, i.e. including long-time English learners and/or reclassification rates. The Task Force recommends creating a new data marker of “English Learner re-designated” for reclassified ELs, as a means of capturing a fuller picture of student performance.
For public elementary schools and secondary schools that are not high schools in the State—(I) a measure of student growth, if determined appropriate by the State; or (II) another valid and reliable statewide academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance.	Growth measure <sup>27</sup>	The Task Force encourages the SBE and CDE to research potential growth models for inclusion in the system. This should include both SBAC scores and growth across other indicators.

<sup>25</sup> Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015.

<sup>26</sup> From LCFF State Priorities, augmented to meet federal requirements.

<sup>27</sup> The task force is not putting forth a specific way to measure growth, but recommends that that State Board of Education continue to research growth measure methodologies.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Table 2: State-Required Indicators

ESSA Requirement <sup>25</sup>	Recommended California Indicators <sup>26</sup>	Explanatory Notes
Whole Child Outcomes		
Not less than one indicator of school quality or student success that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance; is valid, reliable, comparable, and statewide; and may include measures of student engagement, educator engagement, student access to and completion of advanced coursework, postsecondary readiness, school climate and safety, and any other indicator other State chooses that meets the requirements of this clause.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspensions / expulsion rates</li> <li>• Statewide school climate survey</li> <li>• Chronic absenteeism</li> <li>• College &amp; career readiness indicator</li> </ul>	<p>Suspension and expulsion data are currently available and chronic absenteeism soon will be. Both are local measures of student access and engagement that help predict school achievement and high school graduation. The Task Force recommends that suspension / expulsion rates be utilized in conjunction with and tied to authentic programmatic work that builds positive school climate such as alternative discipline or restorative justice approaches.</p> <p>A statewide school climate survey of students, parents, and teachers could include questions on course breadth and access; parental involvement; basic services; safety and social-emotional supports, teaching and administrative supports, and access to appropriate counseling services, nurses, and school psychologists.</p> <p>A non-test-based indicator of college and career readiness should measure the extent to which students complete courses and programs (completion of A-G, high-quality CTE sequences and internships) that support college and career readiness and the development of 21st Century skills such as collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and creativity.<sup>28</sup> This could be reviewed in conjunction with other academic indicators as a means for holistically measuring the skills and abilities students need to be college and career ready.</p>

<sup>28</sup> The Task Force recognizes that there is not currently a state-adopted tool that measures 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills like collaboration, communication, problem solving, and creativity. These are qualities that can be evaluated through performance assessments. The Task Force recommends that the State Board of Education pilot and study performance assessments that can measure these competencies as they relate to college and career readiness.

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Table 3: State-Reported Indicators		
Outcome Area	Recommended California Indicators	Explanatory Notes
Academic Outcomes		
College, career, and life readiness indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students completing A-G; approved CTE sequence; or both</li> <li>Students meeting college standard on AP / IB / dual credit coursework</li> <li>Physical fitness</li> <li>Science assessment results, once each in grades 3-5; 6-8; 10-12 for a total of three times</li> </ul>	<p>If completion of A-G, approved CTE sequences, or AB / IB / dual credit coursework are not included in the state required college and career readiness indicator, they could be included here.</p> <p>Physical fitness data are already collected by the state.</p> <p>As science assessments develop, they could be considered by the SBE in the future as a potential addition to the required indicators.</p>
Whole Child Outcomes		
Student, Teacher, and Parent/Caregiver Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance</li> <li>Student, teacher, and parent/caregiver surveys for measuring school climate</li> </ul>	<p>If attendance and school climate surveys are not included in the state-required set of indicators, they could be included here.</p> <p>School climate surveys could include a core set of questions used across the state with additional locally determined questions for local use. The California Healthy Kids Survey is an available tool for measuring school climate, and measures elements such as access to resources and programs, feelings of safety, and interaction with caring adults.</p>
Equitable Learning Conditions		
Opportunities to learn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher and administrator qualifications</li> <li>School facilities quality</li> <li>Access to curriculum materials</li> <li>Access to full curriculum</li> </ul>	These are required under the Williams Case and/or LCAP.

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Recommended California Indicators		
State provides tools for schools or districts to choose and use at their option, potentially in collaboration with other partners and networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locally selected, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate observational kindergarten readiness assessments<sup>29</sup></li> <li>Classroom embedded, authentic performance assessments</li> <li>Social-emotional learning indicators</li> <li>Parent Engagement</li> </ul>	<p>As part of its effort to support local continuous improvement efforts, the state could develop and calibrate a library of tools and measures for <b>voluntary</b> use by LEAs and schools. Several of these may be available at the time of system launch (launch library)<sup>30</sup> while others will require further time and resource investment (developmental library).<sup>31</sup></p> <p>CA has access to the Innovation Lab Network Performance Assessment Resource Bank that provides performance assessment tasks, rubrics, scoring protocols, and student work linked to CCSS and NGSS standards. These can be made available to schools, possibly as part of the SBAC Digital Library.</p> <p>Assessments of social-emotional learning might also be used to measure 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as collaboration, communication, problem-solving, and creativity, and should be further studied by the SBE.</p>

Table 5: Locally Designed and Reported Indicators		
	Recommended California Indicators	Explanatory Notes
Locally determined indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other LCAP indicators for state and local priorities<sup>32</sup></li> <li>Other locally designed indicators</li> </ul>	Districts are not expected to allocate resources equally to each of the LCAP indicators but to select strategic goals and make resource allocations associated with those.

<sup>29</sup> These are individually administered and open-ended. They should be used as information for teachers and schools to ensure their youngest students are receiving the culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate supports they need. Multiple validated kindergarten readiness support tools exist and may, in the short-term, be suitable for inclusion in the tool library. Appendix A provides a series of recommendations and considerations regarding early learning in the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System, including a set of questions pertaining to the use of Kindergarten Readiness Assessments.

<sup>30</sup> The "launch library" could include: school climate surveys for students, parents and caregivers, and teachers (e.g., California Healthy Kids Survey); tools for measuring implementation of the California Standards (CCSS, NGSS, etc.) including instructional materials, practices, training, etc.; and tools for measuring indicators of a rich, full curriculum that might include art, music, PE, science, social studies.

<sup>31</sup> The "development library" could include: Kindergarten Readiness support tools (Early education/K-12 alignment); Early literacy assessment tools; High school graduation systems (Digital portfolio, capstone project, community service, assessment); and Social-Emotional Learning tools.

<sup>32</sup> California's emerging accountability framework is grounded within a broader system of continuous improvement and support for LEAs and schools. By analyzing performance and performance improvement on multiple indicators and presenting that information in user-friendly formats, the LCFF evaluation rubrics will assist LEAs and schools in self-identifying their strengths and weaknesses, where support is needed, and who is able to provide it.

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STATE SYSTEM INDICATORS

Table 6: Proposed State System Indicators

State Priority	Key Indicator	Performance	Equity	Improvement
Pupil Achievement and Engagement	Aggregated School and District Indicators	Success for state as a whole on the state-required and state-reported indicators	Success for students with higher needs in the state as a whole on each of the state-required and state-reported indicators  Performance and opportunity gap closure	Annual state gains, rate of gap closure Rate of gains for students with higher needs
Pupil Achievement and Engagement	California Awards	Number of schools applying for/receiving awards	Awards for schools and LEAs serving high numbers of higher-needs students	Annual state gains, rate of gap closure Rate of gains (number receiving awards) for schools serving high numbers of higher-needs students
Support for LCAP Development and Implementation	Support Systems Indicators (CDE, CCEE, COEs)	Promulgation of exemplars and promising/best practices and brokering of these and other resources, including technical assistance to districts  Effectiveness of supports to schools and districts, especially those serving high numbers of students with higher needs	Effectiveness of supports to schools and districts, especially those serving high numbers of students with higher needs  Equity and adequacy of resource distribution	Growth in service and capacity (360 <sup>o</sup> reviews)

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

While the indicators and tools proposed by the Task Force for measuring performance, equity, and improvement at all levels of the system are not perfect, we hope to identify what indicators and tools are working over time and develop and refine these tools and measures so that they more accurately reflect the performance, equity, and improvement of the system. Additionally, the Task Force recommends that the state engage in ongoing, formal evaluation work to measure the efficacy of supports, identify best and promising practices, and inform continuous improvement of the system. The only way to ensure that schools and districts are continuously improving is to establish a continuous improvement frame for the system itself; we must commit to reflective and ongoing assessment of how well the system is working, and to making course corrections and updates as needed to better serve California's students and stakeholders.

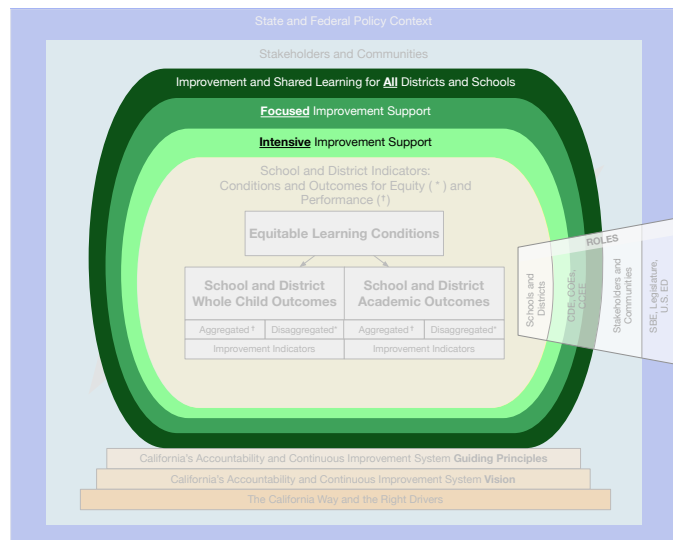
### 4. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

California recognizes that the accountability framework described above is only helpful to the extent that it is integrally tied to a system of continuous improvement and support aligned with the California Way and the "right drivers" described in Section 2.<sup>33</sup> Continuous improvement is the key to ensuring that California's education system realizes its vision for all students.<sup>34</sup>

#### DEFINITION OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The Task Force offers the following definition of continuous improvement:

**Continuous Improvement:** A continuously improving education system is one that learns from experience by carefully measuring the effectiveness of different policies and practices, supporting the intrinsic motivation of educators and stakeholders, sharing best and promising practices, cultivating a culture of reflection and learning, encouraging innovation, and making changes based on learning.<sup>35</sup>



#### BUILDING THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SUPPORT SYSTEM

By looking at measures of performance, equity, and improvement, illustrated through easy-to-use public dashboards, LEAs will be able to self-identify their strengths and weaknesses, where support is needed, and who is able to provide it.<sup>36</sup> This will allow for the development of a system of differentiated improvement supports that recognizes success and shares best and promising practices among all LEAs in the state. The Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI)/California of Education (CDE), the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE), and county superintendents should also use these measures to identify and refer LEAs and schools for focused and intensive improvement support as

<sup>33</sup> Blueprint 2.0 Planning Team (2015).

<sup>34</sup> Continuous improvement, like reciprocal accountability, is something that each level of the system is responsible for.

<sup>35</sup> Adapted from Loeb, S. and Plank, D. (2008). *Learning What Works: Continuous Improvement in California's Education System*. Policy Brief 08-4. Retrieved on March 16, 2016, from <http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Learning%20Brief.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> For example, selecting one indicator in the dashboard might lead to a page with more detail that could include a variety of resources for improvement (informational resources/best practices, information on how to self-refer to CCEE, a list of TA providers, and/or a list of local districts or schools that have achieved significant improvement in that indicator).



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described below.<sup>37</sup> The Task Force recognizes that significant capacity building must take place at all levels of the system, and especially for county offices of education, in order to take on the provision of tiered support summarized below. To be effective, work at the county office level should include teacher representatives.

## THREE LEVELS OF SUPPORT: ALL, FOCUSED, INTENSIVE

Just as modern health systems emphasize well-being and prevention of illness, in California’s Accountability and Continuous Improvement System, the overarching priority should be given to supporting improvement for all, across multiple dimensions and through an ecosystem of support. In those instances when general support efforts do not yield results, focused and intensive supports should be utilized. Table 7 below describes the proposed levels of support for schools and districts.<sup>38</sup>

Table 7: Tiered Support System	
Tier	Type of Support
Improvement and Shared Learning for All LEAs	The indicators should help recognize success/identify the strengths of LEAs and schools and therefore should serve as a means to identify (and self-identify) which LEAs and schools are well-positioned to share their successful practices with others through formal and informal improvement efforts across schools and LEAs. <sup>39</sup> The SSPI/CDE, CCEE, and county offices of education should also develop tools and supports that will be available to all LEAs and schools (LCAP planning supports, vetted best practices, etc.).
Focused Improvement Support	The SSPI/CDE, CCEE, and county offices of education should use the dashboard of indicators to identify schools and LEAs in need of focused intervention, and the areas in which improvement supports are needed.
Intensive Improvement Support	The SSPI/CDE, CCEE, and county offices of education should use the dashboard of indicators to identify LEAs and schools that need more comprehensive and intensive supports to make major improvements in performance and/or growth. Results on selected measures should not only help to identify where intensive supports are needed, but what other similar LEAs might be best positioned to provide them.

<sup>37</sup> Differentiated levels of support could be used across LEAs and schools based on need, similar to the “Response To Intervention” model, which provides varying levels and intensities of support and intervention based on student needs.

<sup>38</sup> Table 7 describes the tiers and types of support/intervention available from state-level entities. The Task Force recognizes the critical roles that will be played by multiple kinds of stakeholders in the full ecosystem of support including researchers, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, philanthropy, coalitions, etc.

<sup>39</sup> Examples of formal and informal improvement efforts include statewide and regional LCFF/LCAP Conferences, LCAP Support Teams, California Labor Management Initiative events, etc.

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USING EACH SET OF INDICATORS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Table 8 shows how each indicator set should be utilized to inform and prompt continuous improvement supports appropriate for each level and dimension of the system, and Table 9 provides an outline of initial continuous improvement activities.

Table 8: Proposed Indicators by Set and Continuous Improvement Use	
Indicator Set	<b>Primary Continuous Improvement Supporter</b> (Working in collaboration with school board members, teachers, classified staff, principals, administrators, other school staff, local bargaining units, parents and caregivers, and students)
State-Required	California Department of Education (CDE); California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE)
State-Reported	CDE; CCEE; County Offices of Education (COEs)
State-Supported, Locally-Reported	CDE; CCEE; COEs
Locally Designed and Reported	COEs, Districts
State System	State Board of Education (SBE), Legislature

Table 9: Key Elements of California's Continuous Improvement System of Support		
Tiers	How elevate equity?	What?
<b>All:</b> <i>Build statewide systems of supports and capacity to promote continuous improvement across all schools and districts</i>	Providing a full system of supports can help connect the state's Accountability and Continuous Improvement System more fully to resources for evidence-based improvement and can help address achievement gaps across the state including within schools, across schools, and across districts.	School and district systems for annual planning for continuous improvement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate data analyses and school diagnostic quality reviews to help determine root causes and identify resource and capacity issues</li> <li>Support the development/inclusion of evidence-based school quality review processes as part of the LCAP process and/or through reform of the accreditation systems</li> <li>Development of supportive and integrative planning tools (LCAP, LEA Plan, SPSA, SSIP – see Section 5)</li> </ul>

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Table 9: Key Elements of California's Continuous Improvement System of Support		
Tiers	How elevate equity?	What?
		District and school recognition systems
		County office support for district planning and implementation (and capacity building for COEs to effectively provide this support)
		Best practice identification and implementation support
		Statewide online resource exchange systems
		Professional learning community and peer networking support systems (including Labor-Management Collaboration)
		Capacity building for data management, utilization, and integration
		Shared findings from research/development/vetting of professional learning and support systems
		Voluntary district technical assistance (TA) and supports
<b>Focused:</b> <i>Identify schools in which student groups consistently demonstrate need for focused support and improvement</i>	Focused supports for schools with consistently underperforming student groups should provide these schools with the necessary supports to elevate performance and close gaps in opportunity and achievement.	Identification of focused support providers
		County office technical assistance
		Shared findings from research/development/vetting of professional learning and support systems
		Referrals to LEA/School TA and supports
<b>Intensive:</b> <i>Ensure significant, sustained, evidence-based interventions in priority LEAs and schools</i>	Focusing on both the highest-need schools and highest-need student groups can directly affect equity by closing gaps in opportunity and achievement.	Identify a group of highest-need districts and schools for intensive support and improvement
		Identification of intensive support providers
		Mandatory LEA/school TA and supports that build LEA/school capacity to sustain improvement over time
		Shared findings from research/development/vetting of professional learning and support systems

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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

It will be critical to build in checkpoints for revisiting the indicators and support systems outlined in this report to ensure not only that the state is using the appropriate measures and methods to support success in performance and equity, but also to determine the extent to which the state is supporting those in need of assistance and/or capacity building. The indicators in Table 6 are a starting point for measuring how the system is performing and improving. The LCFF evaluation rubrics, currently under development by the SBE, should be a foundational tool for this system. The prototype LCFF evaluation rubrics focus on outcome and improvement as dual dimensions of performance, with an emphasis on equity through student group performance.<sup>40</sup> The LCFF evaluation rubrics prototype design includes the following three components:

1. A data analysis tool that displays LEA- and school-level performance (outcome and improvement) on state-level indicators, disaggregated to the student group level and that supports the display of local data;
2. Statements of model practices that describe research-supported practices relevant to various indicators; and
3. References or links to external practice guides, digital resource libraries, and other resources aligned to the statements of model practice and/or specific indicators.

The LCFF evaluation rubrics could be utilized to support and build district and school capacity by analyzing and displaying, at the LEA, student group, and school site levels, state-available data within the LCFF priorities and also allowing LEAs to populate some locally held data into a multiple measures dashboard. Additionally, the rubrics will support LEAs and schools in using the performance data to identify strengths and areas for improvement in their current practices and services relative to the statements of model practices and in connecting LEAs to additional support resources.<sup>41</sup> The CCEE, working with its collaborative partners, should take the lead in creating a framework for determining whether the system is driving performance, equity, and improvement.

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-sbe-feb16item02.doc> (Terminology); <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-sbe-feb16item03.doc> (Architecture); <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/pn/im/documents/memo-sbe-feb16item04.doc> (Graduation Rate Analysis).

<sup>41</sup> This could include more detailed practice guides or resources libraries, information on how to self-refer to CCEE, a list of TA providers, and/or a list of local districts or schools that have achieved significant improvement in that area.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

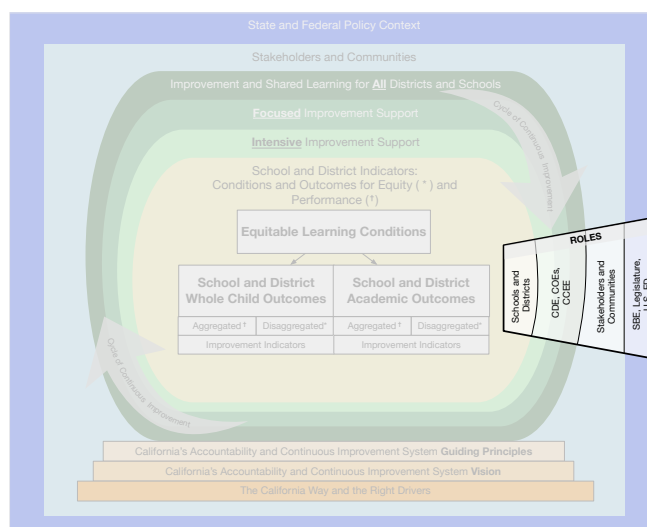
### 5. IMPLEMENTING THE NEW SYSTEM TO DRIVE IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNICATE ABOUT EQUITY AND PERFORMANCE

The Task Force understands that the success of this proposed new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System depends on the quality of its implementation and offers recommendations for the following key implementation areas:

- Roles within the new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System;
- Tools for transparency and communication;
- Processes for recognizing success and improvement; and
- Aligned and simplified plans for accountability and continuous improvement.

#### ROLES

California's Accountability and Continuous Improvement System must include clearly defined roles for local, regional, state, and federal stakeholders. Relationships between each of these actors should build on the concepts of reciprocity and subsidiarity so that each level of the system is held responsible for the contributions it must make to support learning and development for every child. This requires an ecosystem of engaged actors that moves away from the traditional top-down role of the federal and state educational agencies. Strong, collaborative labor-management relationships within each level of the system create the essential conditions for success. Additionally, it will be critical to increase capacity at all levels of the system to fulfill the roles and responsibilities outlined below.



#### REGIONAL AND LOCAL

Schools should:

- Ensure that all students are provided with meaningful opportunities to learn;
- Manage spending and hiring appropriately and make instructional decisions;
- Implement instructional improvement strategies and marshal the financial and professional capital required to implement these strategies and improve student outcomes;
- Engage students, parents and caregivers, educators, and other stakeholders in school-level planning and support; and
- Foster collaboration between labor and management to improve capacity for problem solving, communication, and implementation of new initiatives.

School boards and districts should:

- Provide strong leadership for the development and implementation of effective local accountability and continuous improvement plans;

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- Help schools find the resources and support they need to improve (including supplementary services provided by health and social services agencies);
- Allocate resources from local, state, and federal sources;
- Improve the individual and collective capacities of teachers, classified staff, and school leaders;
- Engage relevant stakeholders to help make informed decisions on behalf of each community's linguistic, cultural, and academic context;
- Work with local and county early learning systems to increase access to and quality of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities to build a strong foundation for later success from the earliest possible moment;
- Work to eliminate access, opportunity, and achievement gaps;
- Enhance collaborative relationships between labor and management in order to improve decision-making processes and ultimately improve student learning;
- Adopt policies that can influence equity efforts, student achievement, and resource allocation; and
- Encourage school board members to seek professional development that strengthens their knowledge and skills around the various aspects of their governance responsibilities, including for example, collective bargaining, student achievement, LCAPs, etc.

County offices of education should:

- Become experts in the process of continuous improvement and support their school districts in implementing proven strategies to improve student success – build and strengthen local and regional professional learning communities and networks;
- Support the development and implementation of effective local accountability and continuous improvement plans;
- Provide consistent technical assistance to districts in need of more focused and intensive improvement support;
- Provide feedback to the state on what is and is not working as a means to continuously improve the system itself;
- Support districts to collaborate in local and county early learning systems to support system alignment, articulation, shared learning, and quality improvement efforts, and increase access to high quality and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities; and
- Support labor-management collaboration as part of the continuous improvement process.

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### STATE

The success of California's Accountability and Continuous Improvement System will, of necessity, hinge upon the ability of diverse stakeholders at all levels of the system to collaborate effectively. It is and will be a challenging and ongoing task to make the shift to new ways of holding each other accountable and supporting system-wide improvement.

To address system-wide needs, there are many support efforts and activities taking place in California, supported by a variety of entities including state associations, nonprofits, institutions of higher education, and philanthropy. However, the state has a primary responsibility to coordinate these efforts, understand how they are collectively addressing implementation needs across the state, identify gaps in the systems of support, and ensure the development of resources and supports most needed in the field.

The state also works to ensure that all districts, schools, and students are being served and supported, especially those in our most struggling communities. The state must be responsible for clear and consistent communication about all elements of the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System including key milestones, tools and resources, opportunities for collaboration and shared learning, best and promising practices, and innovative ideas.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The primary entities that represent “the state” – the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI)/CDE, the State Board of Education (SBE), the County Superintendents, and the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) – must be in alignment in their messages to the field and work in a deeply collaborative way to avoid duplication of effort, avoid confusing or conflicting messages, and enable a strong and highly leveraged, coordinated approach to supporting implementation of the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System.

The SBE will provide **policy direction** for this work. The CDE, County Offices of Education, and the CCEE will be primarily responsible for **state-level implementation**. Strong and effective collaborative ties between these three fundamental statewide players will be essential for success, as will their ability to effectively draw in other local, regional, and statewide entities.

The state must ensure that the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System is true to its name by intentionally reviewing how the system itself is working and finding ways to continuously improve the system to better serve all of its stakeholders. This will require communication and outreach across all levels of the system, and creating a growth mindset among the state’s primary entities.

Additionally, the state should:

- Provide adequate and equitable funding and resources;
- Establish meaningful policies and standards;
- Set clear expectations for performance, equity, and improvement;
- Intervene if a school or district fails to show improvement across multiple student groups in three out of four consecutive years;<sup>42</sup>
- Utilize the California School Recognition Program to highlight and promote achievement and improvement in academic performance and programs and policies that support the physical, social, and emotional health needs of students;
- Establish and develop an ecosystem of peer learning and support by recognizing and identifying areas in which schools and LEAs are excelling and can provide support to others, and identifying areas in which they require assistance;
- Support the elimination of gaps in access, achievement, and opportunity between student groups through establishing key accountability indicators, providing resources and professional learning, and eliminating practices and policies that allow disparities to persist;
- Support LEAs in collaborating across the K-12 and Early Learning Systems to support increased access to and quality improvement efforts for high quality and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities;
- Facilitate shared learning across multiple domains and platforms by providing professional development, investing in data systems, and making essential data available;
- Build the capacity of schools, districts, county offices of education, and state agencies to engage in continuous improvement in partnership with technical assistance providers, institutions of higher education, and philanthropic foundations;
- Establish the conditions for and support effective labor-management collaboration;
- Support an accessible online resource exchange of tools and resources to be shared across systems that includes standardized surveys, reporting tools, data, and vetted promising practices;
- Work together to foster and support continuous improvement in the performance of districts; and
- Cultivate and practice continuous improvement at the state level through ongoing assessment to ensure the system makes progress towards the desired results and commits to making course corrections as needed.

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<sup>42</sup> California Department of Education (2016). *Local Control Funding Formula Overview*. Retrieved on March 14, 2016, from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/lcffoverview.asp>.



## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### FEDERAL

The federal government, and especially the United States Department of Education, should:

- Ensure transparency of results across states and their districts and schools, including in particular the outcomes of students who are poor, from minority populations, or have special needs;
- Support the development of interstate professional learning communities and networks;
- Support investment in high-quality state longitudinal data systems;
- Provide adequate funding and resources;
- Support the elimination of opportunity and achievement gaps; and
- Foster innovation.<sup>43</sup>

### CALIFORNIA'S STAKEHOLDERS AND COMMUNITIES

One of California's greatest assets is its large base of supportive and committed stakeholders. This base includes an array of groups and individuals who care about the success of our public schools. Ranging from advocates, professional organizations, unions, institutions of higher education, philanthropic organizations, parent groups, students, community voices, business organizations, and beyond. These individuals and their organizations believe every California student should have access to an excellent education. This coalition of supportive stakeholders contributes to the success of California's education system writ large, but will also be instrumental in the successful communication about, transition to, and implementation of California's new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System. These actors will also play a key role in the development of local solutions for improving student learning. It will be important that the Accountability and Continuous Improvement System is transparent and approachable, allowing all stakeholder groups to engage in the system.

### USING A DASHBOARD FOR TRANSPARENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND TO INFORM IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS

As indicated by our guiding principles, the system has an obligation to provide useful information that helps parents and caregivers, districts, schools, county offices of education, and policymakers make important decisions. This information also serves as a tool to support deeper inquiry into root causes and areas for capacity building as a means of continuous improvement. To achieve this, the Task Force recommends a dashboard approach, providing easy-to-understand reports in relation to both outcomes and improvement.

To provide information and track progress where applicable, the data for each school or district should be reported by each individual indicator. These results can be translated into descriptions of performance status (e.g., very high, high, intermediate, low, or very low) as well as improvement (e.g., improved significantly, improved, maintained, declined, or declined significantly). This will allow the public, as well as local, county, state, and federal agencies, to see how schools and districts are progressing.

There are a number of ways that the multiple measures of the system can be displayed. The SBE and CDE should consider the models included below.

Like the reporting system in Alberta, Canada (see Figure 3 below), this dashboard approach can be used to guide planning and improvement decisions. Further diagnosis and assistance can be focused on the areas of need represented by these indicators.

<sup>43</sup> Darling-Hammond, L. and Hill, P.T. (2015). *Accountability and the Federal Role: A Third Way on ESEA*, Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and Center on Reinventing Public Education, University of Washington Bothell. Retrieved on December 20, 2015, from: <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED556473.pdf>

SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Accountability Pillar Overall Summary  
Annual Education Results Reports - Oct 2013  
Province: Alberta



Measure Category	Measure Category Evaluation	Measure	Alberta			Measure Evaluation		
			Current Result	Prev Year Result	Prev 3 Yr Average	Achievement	Improvement	Overall
Safe and Caring Schools	Excellent	Safe and Caring	89.0	88.8	88.1	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent
Student Learning Opportunities	Good	Program of Studies	81.5	80.7	80.7	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Education Quality	89.8	89.4	89.3	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent
		Drop Out Rate	3.5	3.2	3.9	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		High School Completion Rate (3 yr)	74.8	74.1	72.7	High	Improved Significantly	Good
Student Learning Achievement (Grades K-9)	Issue	PAT: Acceptable	79.0	79.1	79.2	Intermediate	Declined	Issue
		PAT: Excellence	18.9	20.8	19.9	Intermediate	Declined Significantly	Issue
Student Learning Achievement (Grades 10-12)	Good	Diploma: Acceptable	84.6	83.1	82.5	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Diploma: Excellence	21.7	20.7	20.1	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Diploma Exam Participation Rate (4+ Exams)	56.6	58.2	54.9	High	Improved Significantly	Good
		Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility Rate (Revised)	61.3	61.5	59.4	High	Improved Significantly	Good
Preparation for Lifelong Learning, World of Work, Citizenship	Good	Transition Rate (6 yr)	59.5	58.4	59.2	High	Maintained	Good
		Work Preparation	80.3	79.7	79.9	High	Improved	Good
		Citizenship	83.4	82.5	82.0	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent
Parental Involvement	Good	Parental Involvement	80.3	79.7	79.8	High	Improved Significantly	Good
Continuous Improvement	Excellent	School Improvement	80.6	80.0	80.0	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent

Figure 3

One way to recognize school and district successes and needs for support and intervention is by using a scatterplot that reflects performance and improvement simultaneously, as in Figure 4 on the following page. Each circle represents a separate school or district, with the size of the circle reflecting enrollment; the location on the scatterplot represents performance on the x-axis, and improvement on the y-axis.

This information, presented in this way, allows for schools or districts to see themselves in relation to others and in relation to a standard. This data can be further disaggregated by student group, permitting a school or district to see performance and improvement in relation to how they have served a particular student population. In the lower left hand quadrant, schools or districts that are both low-performing and not improving could be identified for intensive intervention and support. The color-coding in Figure 4 below indicates regions of the graph that correspond to a rating of Excellent (blue), Good (green), Emerging (yellow), Issue (orange), or Concern (red). These regions of the graph vary based on the individual indicator being examined. There may be both baseline standards and performance targets for an indicator and its improvement that should inform these regions. In the example below, baseline standards are 75 for the indicator and 0% for indicator improvement, and performance targets are 90 for the indicator and 2% for indicator improvement.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

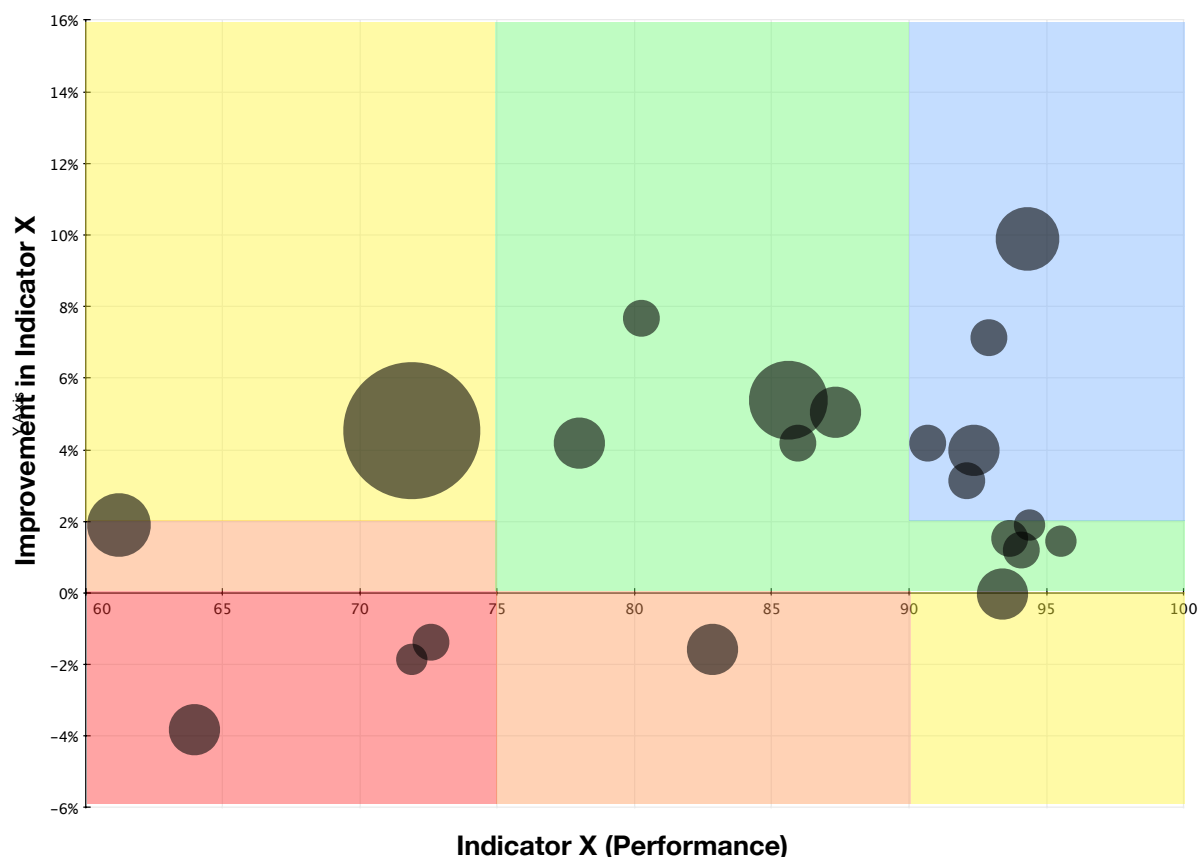


Figure 4

A critical point is that schools and districts in a continuous improvement cycle can identify *any* areas in which they want to improve, and, ideally, access state resources and reach out to schools/districts that have experienced success in those areas to help them improve. California's system would produce this data for identified indicators, such as graduation rates; assessments of ELA, math, English learner proficiency gains; student completion of college and career ready curriculum; attendance and chronic absenteeism; suspensions and expulsions. The data could help schools and districts identify areas for focus, identify others making strong gains, and allow the state to recognize and study successful efforts to share new knowledge with others.

## RECOGNITION

As outlined in the Task Force's vision for the proposed new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System, the new system must **identify and recognize districts, schools, and classrooms that can serve as models and those that need support**, to create an environment in which we can learn from each other, collaborate, and improve together. As such, it is critical to recognize, reward, and highlight success in each of the areas that matter most: performance, equity, and improvement.

The California School Recognition program has long been a part of recognizing excellence in public education across California. Formerly entitled California Distinguished Schools, and now known as Gold

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Ribbon Schools, it has relied on the state's accountability system to determine schools that are eligible for recognition.

Previously, California Distinguished Schools used a minimum API to qualify and each year schools submitted applications after meeting the threshold. Since the suspension of the API, CDE has created Gold Ribbon Schools to recognize excellence in academic achievement, as well as exemplary programs in the arts, nutrition, and physical fitness. Schools submit applications that are scored based on a rubric. Those that are successful on the scoring rubric receive a site visit by county representatives for verification and are subsequently recognized in May of each year.

The proposed new system offers a chance to holistically integrate the recognition program into the "California Way" – with its focus on performance and continuous improvement. In order to be effective, a full redesign of the recognition program must be based on, aligned with, and part of the new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System.

The School Recognition Program must reflect our new system's commitment to equity and the whole child. Knowing that schools working towards goals will not always reach the highest outcome levels immediately, schools should be recognized for both outcomes and improvement. Especially in the early years of improvement, schools and districts should be recognized for improvements in targeted priorities and used as models for others, even though they may not have fully arrived at all of the highest outcome levels. In this recognition system, emphasis should be placed on local solutions that address targeted priorities in local contexts.

Different levels of recognition should result from a variety of factors including sharing of best practices. For example, schools that have the highest levels of performance, in all indicators and across all groups of students, would receive the highest award and would be recognized, not just for performance but for equity among student group populations. Schools that make significant gains, where needed, would also be eligible for recognition even if they have yet to meet a specific performance threshold. Schools would also be eligible for recognition in specific areas of accountability or areas of unique importance to student success that are not included in the accountability system but are known to contribute to improved academic outcomes.

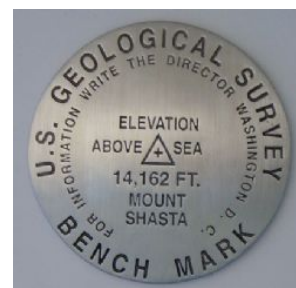
The new School Recognition Program should also expand on the measures included in the new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System and may serve as proof of concept for locally-developed measures or other indicators being explored as the system itself undergoes a continuous improvement process (e.g. additional indicators of school climate and culture, health and physical fitness, family engagement, and other measures of commitment to the whole child).

Table 10: California Performance, Equity, and Improvement Recognition	
Recognition (Sample Award Names for illustrative purposes)	Criteria
Summiteer Award for Elevation Gain	Outstanding performance improvement
The Mt. Whitney Award	Outstanding performance
The Mt. Muir Award	Outstanding equity
The Mt. Shasta Award	Exceptional service and support to other LEAs / schools
The Mt. Baldy Award	Outstanding improvement in eliminating achievement gaps across student groups

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

By explicitly including the California School Recognition Program in the development of the new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System, we will make progress towards an aligned and coherent system that both identifies areas of need and recognizes areas of excellence. The proposed recognitions outlined by Table 10 need not be mutually exclusive — a school or district might receive multiple awards at the same time. Recognized schools

that others might use their achievement as a bearing for their own growth.



### PLANNING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT – UNIFICATION, INTEGRATION, AND SIMPLIFICATION

California has made great strides in providing local stakeholders with the autonomy they need to make decisions on how best to support their students, and trusting them to do it. Today, schools, LEAs, and the California Department of Education are confronted by multiple, overlapping, and sometimes conflicting planning requirements, which are often directed at the same students, educators, and schools. The creation of California's new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System and the recent adoption at the federal level of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provide California with the opportunity to realize one of its guiding principles: promote system-wide integration and innovation. This will be done by unifying, integrating, and simplifying these systems to achieve greater efficiency and focus and authentically engaging multiple constituencies. In addition, while progress has been made implementing the Local Control Funding Formula and the associated Local Control and Accountability Plan, significant work remains to be done to create better planning tools and greater capacity to develop and implement strong plans.

#### TODAY

Currently, both at the state and local levels, there are a variety of planning processes addressing both state and federal priorities that are only occasionally integrated or aligned. Figure 5 illustrates the most prominent of these current planning elements, although there are additional required state and federal plans. While all of these plans serve important purposes, they are often developed in isolation from each other. With the implementation of LCFF, the Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA), a school-level plan, is often viewed as a compliance exercise and not as a vibrant school-level planning activity. The development of the Local Education Agency Plan (LEAP) is required under federal law (ESSA) for districts but covers many of the same domains/priorities as the state of California's required LCAP. ESSA also requires states to develop ESSA State Plans. California is currently in the initial stages of beginning work on this plan, which will also be framed by the state's ongoing work implementing the Local Control Funding Formula. The SPI and CDE have been implementing a school recognition program, California Gold Ribbon Schools, as an interim method for recognizing school success until California's new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System is fully adopted. The Gold Ribbon Schools program requires a separate application/proposal from schools.

# SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

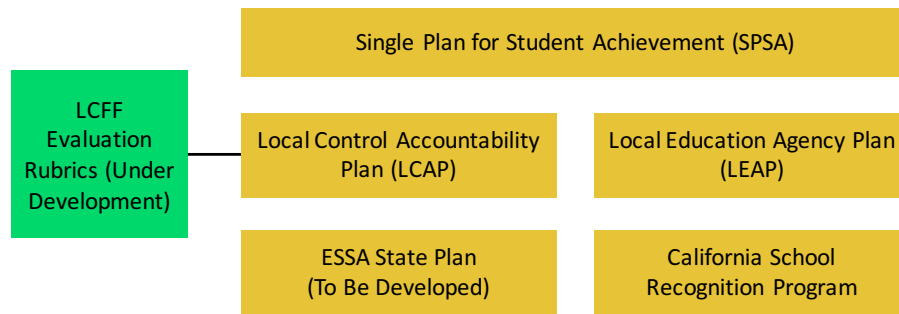


Figure 5

## THE FUTURE INTEGRATION PATHWAY

The continued implementation of the Local Control Funding Formula, the passage of ESSA, and the creation of a new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System provide the opportunity to align major state and federal processes, with a primary emphasis on key local and state agency plans required under federal law. The objective should be to create an aligned planning process at the local level producing the *Local Control Accountability and Continuous Improvement Plan* (which includes the current Single Plan for Student Achievement, Local Control and Accountability Plan, and Local Educational Agency Plan). At the school level, this should allow for greater participation and engagement in relevant planning processes and to ensure that these planning processes are aligned and dialogic. For the state, the objective should be to create and implement a state plan, the *State Accountability and Continuous Improvement Plan*, designed to support local efforts and integrate the ESSA State Plan and the California School Recognition Program (see Figure 6).<sup>44</sup>

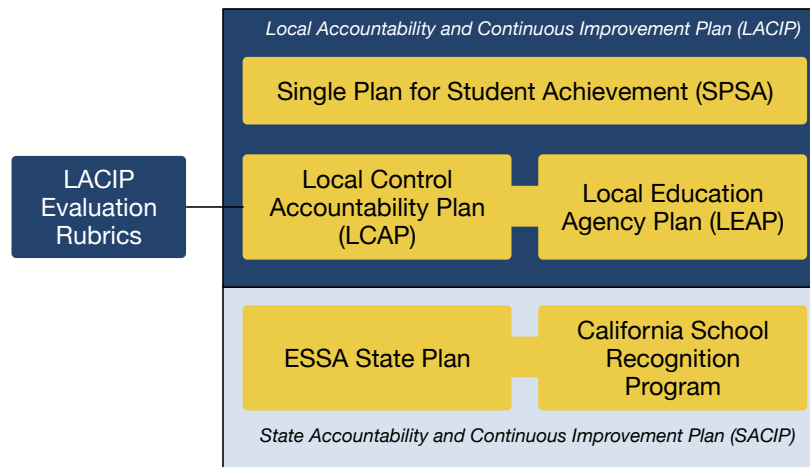


Figure 6

<sup>44</sup> These plan names and acronyms are placeholders.

## SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

### LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL PLAN INTEGRATION

Development of these new and integrated plans should be inspired and guided by evaluation and continuous improvement rubrics and the local, regional, and state support systems (see Figure 7 below).

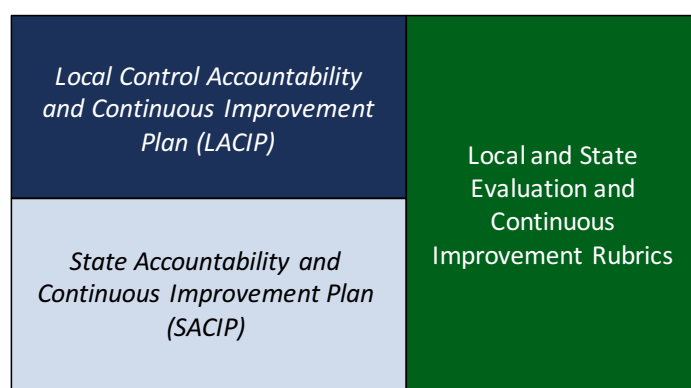


Figure 7

## 6. CONCLUSION

In this report, the Superintendent's Advisory Task Force on Accountability and Continuous Improvement has put forth an ambitious and innovative design for California's new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System. The proposed new system is a significant departure from the traditional ways the state has thought about accountability in the past and builds upon the significant work already undertaken by the State Board of Education. The Task Force recognizes that it will take time for California's diverse education stakeholders to both trust and embrace this new way of doing business. Nevertheless, it is critical for us as a state to make these important shifts, and to begin implementing a system of reciprocal accountability. Together and individually, it is our shared responsibility to provide students with the learning experiences and supports they need to achieve meaningful outcomes.

Shifting to this new system will require time, meaningful learning, and course corrections to ensure effective implementation. The Task Force recognizes that, as a state, we are not ready to implement all aspects of this proposed new system from the outset. For example, the Task Force understands that data is not currently being collected to support each of the identified indicators in this report, and that current continuous improvement systems are not sufficiently resourced for all of the work identified. Now is the time, however, to take meaningful steps in the direction of what we know will work and away from what has failed us, and our children, in the past.

The Task Force sincerely hopes that the Superintendent, in partnership with the State Board of Education and the Legislature, carefully considers the purpose and intent of the new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System as laid out in this report, and commits to the shared learning and state-level continuous improvement efforts required to make this new system a success. The Task Force members look forward to providing continued support and serving as thought partners as the Superintendent, State Board, and Legislature consider these recommendations.



## APPENDIX A. EARLY LEARNING: THE FIRST STEP IN A CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SYSTEM

### 7. APPENDICES

#### A. EARLY LEARNING: THE FIRST STEP IN A CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SYSTEM

*Brain science indicates that 90% of brain development takes place between birth and age 5, making early learning a critical component of California's education system.*

A child's early years are critical for his or her development as the majority of a child's brain development occurs before age five.<sup>45</sup> Inequalities in families' financial and non-financial resources contribute to achievement gaps that manifest early in a child's life, impacting the child through elementary school and beyond.<sup>46</sup> High-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities engage children during a critical period of development and make a significant difference in later academic achievement.<sup>47</sup>

In seeking to develop a continuously improving education system that holds itself accountable for the success of all its students, California must consider the critical importance of early learning. Learning begins the moment a child is born. **Locally articulated pathways linking district and county early learning systems with their TK-12 counterparts can ensure students get the best possible start, building the foundation for lifelong learning and college and career success.**

#### PERFORMANCE: INVESTING IN A STRONG FOUNDATION

Beyond building a strong foundation for learning, investing in the early learning system yields the highest rate of return of any educational investment.<sup>48</sup> High-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities support children in developing the physical and motor skills, social and emotional aptitudes, language, number sense, and cognitive abilities to be active and engaged learners when they enter kindergarten or transitional kindergarten. In fact, students that are "ready for school" are 10 times more likely to meet the expectations of California state standards by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade than those who are less ready when they start school.<sup>49</sup> Children reading at grade-level at 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are more likely to complete high school prepared for college, career, and civic life.<sup>50</sup> Additionally, early math skills have the greatest predictive power on later academic success.<sup>51</sup> Finally, evidence suggests that more than half of the achievement gap found in later school years is already present at kindergarten entry.<sup>52</sup> This has huge implications for children's chances to succeed and for California's education system.

#### EQUITY: ENSURING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY, CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

<sup>45</sup> Executive Office of the President of the United States (2014). *The Economics of Early Childhood Investments*. Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from: [https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/early\\_childhood\\_rep](https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/early_childhood_rep).

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015). *Transforming the Workforce Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*.

<sup>48</sup> *Right Start Commission Report: Rebuilding the California Dream* (2016). Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from: [https://www.commonssensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/kids\\_action/csm\\_rightstartcommission\\_final\\_single-pages\\_o.pdf](https://www.commonssensemedia.org/sites/default/files/uploads/kids_action/csm_rightstartcommission_final_single-pages_o.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Mobilio, L. (2009). "Understanding & Improving School Readiness in Silicon Valley," presentation, Applied Survey Research, Retrieved on September 2013, from: <http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org/storage/database/research-presentations/readykidstoreadyschools/UnderstandingSRinSiliconValley-ASRpresentation2009.pdf>.

<sup>50</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation (2010). *Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*. Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from: [http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-Early\\_Warning\\_Full\\_Report-2010.pdf](http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-Early_Warning_Full_Report-2010.pdf).

<sup>51</sup>

later achievement. *Developmental psychology*, 43(6), 1428.

<sup>52</sup> Stedron, J. M., & Berger, A. (2010). NCSL technical report: State approaches to school readiness assessment. In *National Conference of State Legislatures*. Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from: <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/Educ/KindergartenAssessment.pdf>.

## APPENDIX A. EARLY LEARNING: THE FIRST STEP IN A CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SYSTEM

This report defines equity as follows:

**Equity:** Educational equity exists where students, particularly from vulnerable student groups, are guaranteed the supports and resources needed to take advantage of educational opportunities and succeed in school at the same level as other students.

Though early learning is vital for a child's development, California faces significant unmet needs.<sup>53</sup> The state's high proportion of immigrants means that many children in California face barriers to access based on limited English proficiency. More than 75 percent of children under age five are children of color, and the majority of the state's child population is Latino.<sup>54</sup> High-quality early learning disproportionately benefits children with significant barriers, both in the short- and long-term, yet these are also the children least likely to have access to these programs. Participating in early learning programs creates positive impacts for low-income minority children through adulthood, including: decreased chances of participating in Special Education or repeating a grade, higher likelihood of completing high school, improved health outcomes, and lower chance of being charged with a crime.<sup>55</sup>

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### IMPROVEMENT: SUPPORTING INTEGRATION AND ALIGNMENT THROUGH THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

California will be better equipped to achieve its desired outcomes for students, schools, and communities if children enter school with the skills and abilities necessary for success. As part of a whole-child, cradle to career continuum, the state's new Accountability and Continuous Improvement System should provide the mechanisms and supports for local districts to collaborate and partner with early learning systems to achieve the following:

- Develop a shared vision of high-quality and culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate early learning opportunities and supports;<sup>56</sup>
- Build the communication and information-sharing mechanisms for system articulation to support smooth transitions for children and their families;
- Collaboratively define the assessments, measures, and/or indicators of effective, developmentally appropriate student learning environments from preschool through primary grades; and
- Implement an aligned approach to support student learning and development.

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### USING THE RIGHT DRIVERS: PERFORMANCE, EQUITY, AND IMPROVEMENT FOR CALIFORNIA'S YOUNGEST STUDENTS

The CDE's mission includes supporting the state's youngest learners; it states:

California will provide a world-class education for all students, from early childhood to adulthood. The Department of Education serves our state by innovating and collaborating with educators, schools, parents, and community partners. Together, as a team, we prepare students to live, work, and thrive in a multicultural, multilingual, and highly connected world.

To achieve this mission, the state is committed to using the "right drivers" to support continuous improvement in the state's education system. The following recommendations suggest a pathway for using these drivers to support alignment across local districts and early learning systems:

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<sup>53</sup> American Institutes for Research (2016). *Unmet Need for Preschool Services in California: Statewide and Local Analysis*. Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from : <http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Unmet-Need-for-Preschool-Services-California-Analysis-March-2016.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Right Start Commission Report: Rebuilding the California Dream (2016).

<sup>55</sup> RAND Corporation (2005). *The Economics of Investing in Universal Preschool Education in California*. Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from: [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND\\_MG349.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG349.pdf).

<sup>56</sup> The Task Force wants to be very clear that early learning programs must meet the developmental needs of young children, and should focus on play-based opportunities to learn and build intrinsic curiosity.

APPENDIX A. EARLY LEARNING: THE FIRST STEP IN A CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SYSTEM

The Right Drivers	Importance	Opportunities for cross-system application
Investing in and building educator <b>professional capital</b>	A recent Institute of Medicine and National Research Council Report noted, “The science of child development and early learning clearly indicates that the work of lead educators for young children of all ages requires the same high level of sophisticated knowledge and competencies related to child development, content knowledge, and educational practices.” <sup>57</sup> This is true from preschool through primary grades and transcends early learning and TK-12 system boundaries.	As recommended in <i>Blueprint 2.0</i> , California must “Elevate public opinion about the education profession (including the early childhood education and bilingual workforce) as a respected and desirable career pathway.” At the state level, this could be supported by ensuring that teachers responsible for early learning have the necessary training and competencies to offer developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences.
Emphasizing <b>collaborative efforts</b> based on shared aspirations and expectations	Through collaboration, local districts and early learning systems should develop a shared vision of high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities and supports as a means to identify gaps and opportunities, and ensure that all students have access to the early learning opportunities that build a strong foundation for future success.	Through this collaborative effort, localities may find opportunities to braid and blend funding sources, identify in-kind resources that could support expanded opportunities for young students, and work together to develop a locally driven plan for ensuring all eligible students in a district have access to high-quality, culturally and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities and supports. Collaboratively, the state and localities should also support advocating for increased funding to support these early learning opportunities. This can potentially be achieved through the LCAP development process, through F5 IMPACT system mapping processes and Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) efforts, or through efforts supported by Local Planning Councils.

<sup>57</sup> Institute of Medicine and National Research Council (2015).

APPENDIX A. EARLY LEARNING: THE FIRST STEP IN A CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SYSTEM

The Right Drivers	Importance	Opportunities for cross-system application
Supporting <b>effective pedagogy</b>	Early learning, from preschool through third grade, must be developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate to support California’s young children as they develop foundational social-emotional, literacy, and numeracy skills. Evidence suggests that the quality of the adult-child interaction in early learning settings has a major impact on student outcomes. <sup>58</sup>	As recommended in Blueprint 2.0, California must “improve pre-service professional learning and develop in-service professional learning opportunities for early childhood educators.” The Accountability and Continuous Improvement System should support districts to offer professional learning opportunities to educators teaching young children. Districts should also ensure that the professional development opportunities they offer support teachers and classified staff to gain the developmental, cultural, and linguistic competencies necessary to support the great diversity of California’s young learners.
Developing <b>systemic solutions</b> to create a coherent and positive education system	Local articulation of early learning and TK-12 systems will provide students with the early learning foundations they need to be successful and thrive.	To accomplish this, California should implement the following recommendations from the California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan: <sup>59</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of California’s early learning standards should be built into the state’s continuous quality improvement mechanisms.</li> <li>• Learning standards should be aligned across years and systems.</li> <li>• Schools should be equipped to address the full range of child needs, including skills development and executive function.</li> <li>• Prekindergarten, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten professionals should participate in collaborative professional development to learn best practices and engage each other to support learning.</li> <li>• Elementary school principals should participate in training on the role of early learning.</li> </ul>

<sup>58</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2011). *Quality of Caregiver-Child Interactions for Infants and Toddlers (Q-CCIT): A Review of the Literature*. Retrieved on April 14, 2016, from: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/quality\\_caregiver.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/quality_caregiver.pdf).

<sup>59</sup> Governor’s State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care (2013). *California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan*. Retrieved on September 2013, from: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/ce/documents/compearlylearningplan2013.pdf>.

## APPENDIX A. EARLY LEARNING: THE FIRST STEP IN A CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING SYSTEM

### CONSIDERING INDICATORS OF PERFORMANCE, EQUITY, AND IMPROVEMENT

California's Accountability and Continuous Improvement System is based on three equally important pillars: performance, equity, and improvement. These pillars are critical to examining the extent to which we are providing our youngest students with the early learning experiences they deserve. The State Board of Education, the CDE, and local districts and their partners should reflect upon the following considerations when identifying indicators and continuous improvement activities in each of these areas:

#### PERFORMANCE

- What tools are currently being used to assess kindergarten readiness, language acquisition, healthy development, and other areas of interest such as family involvement and/or smooth transitions to kindergarten and transitional kindergarten?
- Are these tools valid, reliable, and developmentally appropriate?
- Are assessments offered in a student's native language to demonstrate outcomes for Dual Language Learners?
- What is the potential desired use of a kindergarten readiness assessment (population-level information gathering or student-level data to inform instruction)?

#### EQUITY

- Do all children who are eligible for early learning opportunities, as identified by local, state, and/or federal eligibility requirements, have access to these opportunities?
- Does access to high quality, developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities differ by subgroups within the local population?
- Are Dual Language Learners appropriately supported in early learning opportunities?
- Are families of all races and socio-economic levels empowered with the information they need to make early learning decisions on behalf of their children?

#### IMPROVEMENT

- What is the level of quality of the early learning opportunities within a community/district?
- Is a district participating in local QRIS efforts?
- What pedagogical and professional learning supports are offered to local early learning professionals?
- To what extent is there collaboration among the systems that offer early learning opportunities to students within a community?
- How much funding is allocated to provide high quality and developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate early learning opportunities?

### CONCLUSION

Alignment of the early learning and TK-12 systems is essential to addressing the whole child (cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, and physical development) and to closing achievement gaps. The state's Accountability and Continuous Improvement System must support districts in their local decisions to align systems to provide a more seamless, developmentally appropriate continuum of early learning experiences. This should be coupled with meaningful progress at the state level to more systematically bridge the systems responsible for educating our youngest learners.

APPENDIX B. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM  
PLANNING

**B. STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Articulate the state's expectations for districts, charter schools and county offices of education.**

- Promote a broad understanding of the specific goals that need to be met at each level of the educational system.

**Foster equity.**

- Create support structures, including technical assistance for districts and schools, to promote success for all students regardless of background, primary language, or socioeconomic status.
- Continue to disaggregate data by student subgroup for both reporting and accountability purposes.

**Provide useful information that helps parents, districts, charter schools, county offices of education and policymakers make important decisions.**

- Assist and engage parents, educators and policymakers through regular communication and transparent, timely reporting of data so they can take action appropriate to their roles.

**Build capacity and increase support for districts, charter schools, and county offices.**

- Seek to build capacity at all levels by reinforcing the importance of sound teaching and learning practices and providing necessary support to help schools reach their goals.
- Create multiple ways to celebrate district and school success based on state identified and locally designated metrics. Intervene in persistently underperforming districts to build capacity along a continuum of increasing support and attention through state and regional mechanisms of support. Ensure that there are services and skills necessary to meet the needs of the students and families they serve.

**Encourage continuous improvement focused on student-level outcomes, using multiple measures for state and local priorities.**

- Focus on ongoing improvement of student outcomes, including college- and career-readiness, using multiple measures that reflect both status and growth. This means, in part, making determinations based on some version of the following two foundational questions:
  - How well is this school/district performing?
  - Is the school/district improving?
- Tie accountability determinations to multiple measures of student progress, based on the state priorities, integrating data from various forms of assessment, some of which will be locally determined. Balance validity and reliability demands with the ability to clearly and simply explain results to stakeholders, including the use of a multiple measures dashboard.

**Promote system-wide integration and innovation.**

- Purposely and effectively integrate each accountability system component, including groups and technologies, creating a coherent, effective and efficient support structure for districts, charter schools and county offices of education.
- Recognizing that there is a new context for accountability in the state, the coming years will provide new insights at all levels of the educational system. To that end, it is important to encourage continued learning, innovation, and improvements related to the accountability system as a whole, core elements of the system, and the impact of the system on individual schools and districts.

APPENDIX C. SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY TASK FORCE ON ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS  
IMPROVEMENT

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CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

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